

CITY OF DUNWOODY
41 Perimeter Center East, 2nd Floor
Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701
www.dunwoodyga.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

Date: March 8, 2010

Subject: Creation of an Economic Development Strategy

The fundamental purpose of a city government is to provide for the efficient and effective delivery of services to the residents and businesses. However, Dunwoody operates in a competitive environment, not unlike a private business. The City of Dunwoody competes with other communities for residents, businesses, and jobs.

The City of Dunwoody is currently engaged in the development of a comprehensive land use plan and an aggressive unified branding campaign. These two planning efforts will move the City of Dunwoody forward with a vision for the future and a strong brand capturing the essence of our City. However, a comprehensive economic development strategy is needed to ensure that our plans for the future are realized. A comprehensive economic development strategy will help the City understand key economic development trends and challenges it faces; lend insight to our local economy as it relates to our plans for the future; and make recommendations for what types of actions the City should focus on for business and job creation, business retention, and enhancing the City's economic base. Branding, land use planning, and economic development truly establish a three-legged stool that will lead to ultimate success for the City of Dunwoody.

In this memorandum, I have outlined the steps the City will need to take to develop a viable economic development strategy as well as the resources and approach necessary to implement the economic development strategy.

Following this memo, I have included a couple of good examples of economic development strategies for municipalities. These may provide additional insights as to the documentation we can expect at the conclusion of this process.

DEVELOPING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. Demographic Analysis

Demographic analysis will include an assessment of the characteristics of the population, such as size, growth, density, and distribution. This will provide insights into the links between these characteristics and the cultural, economic, geographic, and other social attributes present in the City.

2. Current Economic Condition Analysis

Evaluation of retail, residential, and office profile including analysis of existing business inventory, property inventory (stacking plans), existing regulations and zoning, current plans, infrastructure analysis, market demand profile, and competitive analysis. The current economic conditions analysis will identify current demand for various markets and development types.

3. Stakeholder Interviews

Discussions with property owners, business owners, Chamber of Commerce, PCID, commercial brokers, investors, industry experts, and economic development experts will promote a candid, open forum for information sharing while helping identify key market trends and obstacles for the City.

4. SWOT Analysis

Factors internal to the City usually can be classified as Strengths (**S**) or Weaknesses (**W**). Those external to the City can be classified as Opportunities (**O**) or Threats (**T**). This analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as a **SWOT** analysis. The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the City's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which we operate.

5. Strategy Development

Based on the research and information gathered, a 5-10 year economic development strategy can be created by working with the City Council, key staff, PCID, and Chamber of Commerce.

6. Develop Existing Performance Baseline and Future Performance Goals

Using baseline data and research, the City will be able to develop specific, measurable goals to ensure future performance aligns with the economic development strategy.

7. Organize Staffing/Consulting/Partnership Plan for Implementation

RESOURCES NECESSARY

1. Funds for research component (\$10,000 - \$15,000)
2. Volunteers to assist City Manager to conduct interviews and assist with analyzing data

RECOMMENDED ACTION

I recommend the City Council discuss the steps listed above that I believe are necessary to effectively begin the process of developing an economic development strategy. I will personally lead this effort in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the PCIDs. I believe that the development of the plan can be done within existing staff resources and talent. Funds will be necessary to pay for the accumulation and synthesis of aggregate data and preliminary analysis.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR THE

CITY OF LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

2003-2004



APRIL 15, 2004

The City of La Crosse's Economic Development Strategic Plan

	Page No.
Table of Contents	
Executive Summary.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Background & Issues Economic Trends	
The Vision.....	4
Process & Focus Business Sectors	
Strategic Direction Number I -- City Hall Improvement.....	6
Goals Actions	
Strategic Direction Number II -- Downtown Revitalization is Key for the Region.....	9
Goals Actions	
Strategic Direction Number III -- Development & Redevelopment Priorities.....	11
Goals Actions	
Future Economic Development Areas Map.....	12
Implementation Grid.....	15
Appendices	
1. Inventory & Analysis of La Crosse's Economy	
2. Business Sector Goals & Actions	



Executive Summary

The City of La Crosse's economy has evolved over the past several decades, changing from an economy with a strong reliance on a manufacturing base to one that is much more diversified. All would agree that the only real constant in today's economy is change and that the City has weathered these economic changes pretty well. However, the changes yet to come will be much more intense and long-lasting and will reach across all business sectors; so the City must take the necessary steps now to ensure that the local economy remains strong and diverse. The single most important step that the City has taken is the completion of this Economic Development Strategic Plan for the City of La Crosse.

A number of items point to the need for this Economic Development Strategic Plan. Whether it is the recent closure of several large employers, including the G. Heileman Brewing Company, La Crosse Footwear, and the Fleming Companies, Inc. or the recent announcements by several large employers to undertake expansions or move corporate headquarters just outside of the City, or to move jobs overseas; the City must be better prepared for the changes to come.

A look at the City's population and housing trends also shows that the City is not growing as well as the rest of La Crosse County, nor the State or Nation for that matter. And while most of the jobs in the area are still located within the City, more employees live outside the City causing stress for the region's environment and transportation systems. This trend poses difficult challenges for the City as the jobs start following the residents. The lure of raw land and easy access to Interstate 90 are contributing to this phenomenon and those announcements by the large employers are symptoms of this larger problem. This Strategic Plan acknowledges this and recommends actions for making the City of La Crosse more attractive for employment, population and housing growth. If the City can do a better job of retaining and growing our existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and make the City more attractive for residential development, this Strategic Plan will be considered a success.

In addition to these examples, creating an overall economic development strategy was also mentioned in the City's first Comprehensive Plan in decades, *Confluence*, in order to better deal with these and other issues related to the growth and development of the City. The Strategic Plan and *Confluence* work in tandem to improve the overall health and vitality of the City.

With these issues and challenges in mind, Mayor John D. Medinger appointed the 14-member Blue Ribbon Committee to undertake the task of creating this Strategic Plan. This group has been meeting regularly since August 2003 and has studied a whole host of issues such as the City's land availability, the continued restructuring of the economy away from manufacturing, the importance of technology, and the competition from other area communities for jobs and tax base to name a few. The Blue Ribbon Committee also sponsored four focus group meetings to explore how well the City of La Crosse was communicating with and serving the local business community. The resulting Economic Development Strategic Plan for La Crosse is a culmination of their efforts and sets the goals and actions for the City's Economic Development program for the next several years.

Several long-term themes emerged from this strategic planning process, including that the City must act as a catalyst for maintaining and enhancing the area's quality of life; that the City must collaborate with area governments and economic development groups; and that the City must work to assist local companies both large and small.

With these long-term themes in mind, the Blue Ribbon Committee recommended three "Strategic Directions" for the City as well as goals and actions to implement these themes. The following is a listing of these Strategic Directions and goals for the City's Economic Development program, with the specific details and actions listed in the Strategic Plan starting on Page 6.

Strategic Direction No. I -- City Hall Improvement. The Blue Ribbon Committee found that the City government needs to do a much better job of communicating with and serving the business community. The following are goals for improving City Hall as it relates to business assistance:

- Goal A. Create a service-oriented, can-do attitude in City Hall.
- Goal B. Improve communication with the local business community and larger community about business and development issues.
- Goal C. Streamline the City Council approval process without compromising public input and local, state and federal codes.
- Goal D. Market the assets of our community.

Strategic Direction No. II -- Downtown Revitalization is Key for the Region. The Blue Ribbon Committee feels that the Historic Downtown offers so much already and has the potential to become even more than it is today. The redevelopment of the Downtown benefits the entire region. The goals related to continuing Downtown revitalization include:

- Goal A. Fully utilize and improve the riverfront as a unique activity center.
- Goal B. Promote the Downtown as a place to work, live, shop and play.
- Goal C. Make high priority Downtown redevelopment sites ready.

Strategic Direction No. III -- Development & Redevelopment Priorities. The third Strategic Direction looks at the City geographically and identifies areas for development and redevelopment. The goals are as follows:

- Goal A. Complete the following tasks in order to make redevelopment sites ready.
- Goal B. Prioritize efforts to create and maintain vital neighborhoods in the City.
- Goal C. Work to ensure transportation mobility.

It is envisioned that this Strategic Plan will be implemented over the next several years by closely adhering to the actions identified in the Plan. The action grid starting on Page 15 identifies who will be responsible for implementing the various actions and also the resources that will be necessary to make this all happen.

In addition, the Blue Ribbon Committee strongly believes that there must be a steering group who will pay attention to the Plan's progress and make sure that these recommendations are carried out. Similar to what happened with the successful implementation of the City Vision 2000 Downtown Master Plan using the Downtown Project Management Team, the Blue Ribbon Committee feels that a committee should be appointed who will meet at least once a year to review the Strategic Plan's progress and identify upcoming projects and resources for the Strategic Plan's implementation.

Introduction

The main purpose of the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan is three-fold: (1) to understand the key economic development trends and challenges the City faces; (2) to understand the local economy and past City economic development efforts; and (3) to make recommendations for what types of actions the City should focus on for business and employment creation and retention and for enhancing the City's economic base.

Because the City has in the past and continues to utilize various tools for its Economic Development Program, the Strategic Plan should also help to coordinate and prioritize the use of the various tools and resources. To do all of that, the Strategic Plan should provide the long-term strategy for the City's economic growth and development along with short-term actions to achieve that strategy.

Besides the three-point purpose described above, other important elements of the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan should include (in no particular order): helping to provide an educated and high-quality work force and ensuring that people are paid a living wage--this is especially important because of the critical role education plays in strengthening the local economy; providing information and expertise about the City's role in business creation and retention; ensuring that there is sufficient land and available sites for development and redevelopment; making sure that the City's regulatory and political processes are effective and efficient; assisting the Common Council in prioritizing where and when City resources are used for infrastructure and development/redevelopment projects; fostering communication and collaboration between the City, other governmental entities and the business community; and ensuring that the City's high quality of life continues including working and partnering with the La Crosse School District and post-secondary institutions. The Strategic Plan will be the guiding policy document for the City's Economic Development program.

Background & Issues

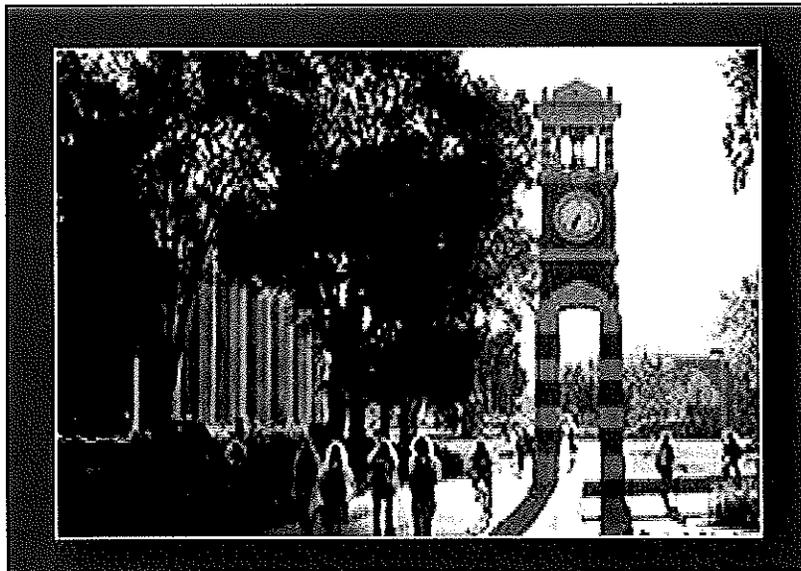
In order to best understand the purpose of the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan, one must first understand where the Strategic Plan fits within the larger context of the City's Economic Development program. Throughout its history, the City has assisted many companies large and small, has created industrial parks and has been a major player in the local economy. The City has also and will continue to support our excellent local educational system and workforce development programs. The City's Economic Development program encompasses the total of all of the City's efforts and activities at working with the private sector in creating and maintaining businesses and jobs and in enhancing the City's economic base. Such efforts include:

- Providing low-interest loans and tax credits;
- Providing technical and other assistance;
- Building infrastructure including streets, parking, sidewalks, trees, lighting, public furniture, and utilities;
- Redeveloping key properties; and
- Enhancing the community's larger quality of life including education, recreation, and cultural amenities.

April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

Critical for the City's continued growth and development will be how it handles those key trends and challenges that are yet to show themselves. Currently, we are facing several issues and trends, as summarized here. The following list was excerpted from the City's Comprehensive Plan, known as *Confluence*. These issues and challenges include:

- Land availability, because of the lack of raw land for new industrial development;
- Ensuring a living wage employment, because many people feel that wages are too low and that it is difficult to find employment with health benefits;
- The technology sector is key to the future, because of the greater reliance on technology for all types of jobs;
- The continued restructuring away from manufacturing tells us that the City must have a diversified economy;
- The central business district should continue being a white-collar job incubator;
- The importance of developing an overall economic development strategy for the City, which is being addressed through this Strategic Plan;
- Providing the proper balance between commercial, industrial and residential land uses to ensure that the City retains and attracts both jobs and residents;
- The redevelopment of brownfields and other underutilized sites which is related to our lack of raw land;
- The competition from other area communities for jobs and tax base; and
- Brain drain, because the City is losing many of its university and technical college graduates.



The University of Wisconsin at La Crosse

Economic Trends

A number of indicators point to the fact that the City is not doing as well as the rest of La Crosse County, the State of Wisconsin or the United States. A more detailed reporting and analysis of La Crosse's economy is provided in Appendix 1.

However, a brief review here of year 2000 U.S. Census information indicates that while the City of La Crosse is growing in both overall population (1.60%) and new housing units (6.39%) since 1990, the City's rate of growth for both trails the rest of La Crosse County (17.91% & 23.09% respectively), the State of Wisconsin (9.65% & 12.91%), and the United States (13.15% & 13.34%). The City's housing stock is also older than those other places of comparison and the City's rate of owner occupied housing is around 50%, well below that percentage for the rest of La Crosse County, which has nearly 80% of its housing being owner occupied.

The City's per capita income trails La Crosse County, the State and the Nation and the rate of growth since 1990 trails La Crosse County. These Census numbers all show that the City is not capturing as much growth as the rest of La Crosse County, has older and less owner occupied housing stock and has a larger number of poorer residents.

Similarly, the City's growth in the civilian labor force since 1990 mirrors its growth in population and housing, as the City's rate of growth (6.08%) trails the growth rate for the rest of La Crosse County (20.69%), the State (13.98%) and the Nation (11.50%). In the year 2000, while most of the jobs were still located within the City of La Crosse, more of those employees lived outside of the City and commuted to work to a much greater extent than in 1990. And while our labor force continues to grow, there is trouble on the horizon. According to the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board's *State of the Workforce Report 2003*, "Labor demand will outstrip supply somewhere around years 2006-2007."

In addition to the shift of employees outside of the City, the City's economic base continues to shift away from the manufacturing sector. By far the largest increase in employment was in the service sector, where the number employed increased by over 71% from 1990 to 2000. Other significant changes included decreases in the wholesale, retail, and transportation & utilities sectors, and a 16.64% increase in the education and health sector. Of note, the manufacturing sector declined by nearly 10%. The growth in the City's labor force does not compare as favorably to the growth in the rest of La Crosse County. Besides the overall growth rate, the remainder of the County gained those employed in manufacturing jobs from 1990 to 2000, while the City lost nearly 10% in this sector. The services and the education & health sectors also grew at faster rates in the rest of the County.

All of these indicators reinforce the need for this Strategic Plan.

The Vision

The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee's vision is that in the very near future, because of the implementation of the goals & actions contained within this Economic Development Strategic Plan, the City of La Crosse will be known as:

- The Place with hard-working, innovative, knowledgeable employees who work with their minds and their hands;
- An Historic Rivertown, with a vibrant Downtown where people live, work, shop, and play;
- A Center of Health and Wellness;
- A Center for Learning, including higher education and outstanding public and private schools;
- The Social Capital of the region, for cultural amenities, shopping, and recreation; and
- The Place for housing choices in interesting and safe neighborhoods.

Process & Focus

As a part of the process to create the City's Strategic Plan, the Blue Ribbon Committee hosted several focus group meetings to understand a number of issues, including how the City works with the local business community. The purpose of the focus group meetings was to hold a sincere, open dialogue about the City of La Crosse, its past economic development efforts, problems and issues facing the City, and ideas for solutions to these problems. In short, the Blue Ribbon Committee learned that the City needs to do a better job at how the City serves and communicates with the business community.

In order to accomplish this objective of better communication and better service, there must be a cultural change at City Hall. This new culture will be characterized as one that has an open, dynamic, and positive can-do attitude. With the City government showing this leadership, the private sector will respond. Three long-term strategies will guide the City in its actions toward economic development. These guiding strategies are that the City will:

- Act as a catalyst to maintain and enhance the quality of life and the special assets we enjoy here; and use these qualities and assets as economic development tools for retaining and expanding existing businesses and for attracting new people and jobs to the City; and
- Collaborate with La Crosse County government and the other surrounding Cities, Towns, and Villages and other public and private entities on economic development and related issues. Key will be to promote the coordination of efforts and activities of the various public and private economic development entities in order to eliminate any gaps in service or duplication of efforts.
- Assist companies both large and small and work to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses equally.

A key for retaining our existing businesses will be for the City to "grow our own." That means the City must do the things necessary to help our local entrepreneurs and small businesses prosper and expand. This help can come in a variety of forms, such as supporting our local educational systems and workforce development programs, helping them find start-up and investment dollars, assisting them in their land and space needs, helping them through the permitting and Common Council processes, providing loans and tax credits when necessary, and getting similar businesses together (i.e. clusters) to see if there are mutual benefits.

In order to attract new businesses, the City must define and market our professional and skilled labor force and local educational system, our quality of life and the things that make us unique. The City must also ensure that our services, i.e. the Common Council processes, codes and permitting, and communication are working properly so that new business inquiries are handled promptly and professionally.

Business Sectors

As a part of this Strategic Plan, the Blue Ribbon Committee has identified several business sectors for retention, expansion and attraction. These targeted business sectors include: specialized manufacturing, food products and processing, information technology & related companies, printing & related companies, education, tourism, professional services, health care, and transportation; however this list of sectors is not meant to be exclusive, as the City's economy is comprised of many businesses not currently placed in one of the aforementioned sectors. Please see Appendix 2 to this Strategic Plan for a full discussion about the City's business sectors.

The targeted sectors represent the cluster of business and related companies which can build upon one another and take advantage of economies of scale and their close proximity to each other (See the *Fostering Cluster Development in Wisconsin Report* for additional information and language about the importance of business clusters and their positive impacts at the State level). For each individual business sector, the City will:

- Devote funding and technical assistance. Several of the State of Wisconsin's identified clusters are very important to the local economy such as food products and processing, printing, small engine manufacturing, tourism, and information technology. The City's responsibility should be to help coordinate the State's efforts with these local industry clusters and identify local needs for funding and technical assistance.
- Establish regular communication between the City and each local cluster group. This will include setting up regular meetings with each cluster and the Mayor, City Executives and Common Council.
- Research and track local economic information and trends. Provide relevant information via the City's web site and economic development newsletter concerning local economic development information and trends, City programs, vacant and available land and building space, and other information.

Strategic Directions

The resources of the City of La Crosse allocated to economic development will be most effective when focused in three Strategic Directions: City Hall Improvement, Downtown Revitalization, and Development and Redevelopment Priorities. The three Strategic Directions are defined by goals and specific actions, including the timing, resources, and leadership responsibility. The structure for presenting the strategies is as follows.

Strategic Direction Number I -- City Hall Improvement. The City is actively and extensively involved in economic development and it is a given that the City will continue to be actively involved at the local level. The City needs to do a better job of communicating with and providing service to the business community. Through the efforts of the Blue Ribbon Committee and the results of the focus group meetings held with business and community leaders, several goals for the improvement of City government have been identified. These are:

Goal A. Create a service-oriented, can-do attitude. A service-oriented attitude is one in which the City is responsive to business questions and issues, and works sincerely to be of service. In order to be successful, the Mayor, City Council, and City Executives must embrace this service-oriented attitude. In order for this cultural change to happen, the City will need to understand what a service-oriented attitude means and how it can change how the City provides service. It is believed that the Common Council must take the lead in order to make this happen.

Actions:

1. Engage a service and organizational expert/consultant to work with the Mayor, City Council and City Executives to audit the City's service delivery, committee structure and review processes; to suggest changes and improvements, and how this attitude can positively change the City's business environment.
2. Designate a point person (the Economic Development Planner) who regularly meets and communicates with the business community to relay information about programs, concerns, problems, etc., and acts as a liaison.
 - a. Create a "code green" process for networking City departments and the private sector when a business inquiry is received or an important business issue is identified. Code green is an industry term for helping a business, similar to a "code blue" in the health care field -- everyone drops what they're doing to help out.
 - b. Post information on the City's website related to "If you want to start a business" and "If you want to move here."
 - c. Redesign the City's web site to provide contact and program information, application forms, meeting dates/times and process, and a data base of available land and buildings.
 - d. Develop a way to measure the City's progress with focus groups, surveys, comment forms, etc.
3. Provide technical and financial assistance.
 - a. Assist businesses in obtaining critical start-up funds and venture capital by working with the local angel investors group.
 - b. Continue providing incentives and other assistance to both retain and attract businesses including the Upper Floor Renovation Loan and Small Business Development Loan programs, tax credits through the Western Wisconsin Technology Zone and City of La Crosse Community Development Zone, Tax Increment Financing, etc.

- c. Continue support of and partnering with the local educational systems.
- d. Continue working with the various economic development entities to provide technical and financial assistance, including the UW-L Small Business Development Center, the La Crosse Area Development Corporation, Downtown Mainstreet Inc., SCORE, the Greater La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, the La Crosse Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Western Wisconsin Technical College, the Coulee Region Business Center, Workforce Connections and Workforce Development groups, and the Mississippi Valley Labor Management Council.
- e. Create a "first call for help" manual for La Crosse entrepreneurs. As an example, "First Call for Help" is a local directory of social service providers that presents information and contacts about the various local programs.

Goal B. Improve communication with the business community and larger community about business and development issues.

Actions:

- 1. Establish better communication channels with the business community by:
 - a. Hosting a quarterly roundtable meeting with the Mayor, City Council, City Executives and business clusters to educate them about the City's business assistance efforts, to assess how the City is performing, to generate ideas of how the City can assist them and help them deal with the issues they are confronting.
 - b. Developing and distributing a regular City economic development newsletter.
 - c. Participating in regular local meetings with business and service organizations.
- 2. Develop a media strategy.
 - a. Implement the Marketing Strategies & Tools project for developing the base media packet and the marketing materials for the City and Downtown La Crosse (Currently underway with Interact Communications). This action to also include providing program information to existing businesses.
 - b. Develop press releases and press packets, La Crosse Tribune articles and guest columns highlighting the City's quality of life and business success stories. Develop similar strategies for television and radio.
 - c. Educate businesses and citizens about the City's business assistance efforts and the complexities of development issues.
- 3. Design and implement an annual City business awards program in order to recognize and appreciate our business community. Collaborate with the other economic development entities awards programs.
- 4. Host a "Business After 5" like reception at City Hall. Make sure that new businesses are invited and recognized.

Goal C. Streamline the Common Council approval process without compromising public input and local, state and federal codes.

Actions:

- 1. As mentioned in Goal A. Action 1, the service and organizational expert/consultant will also study the Common Council process and committee

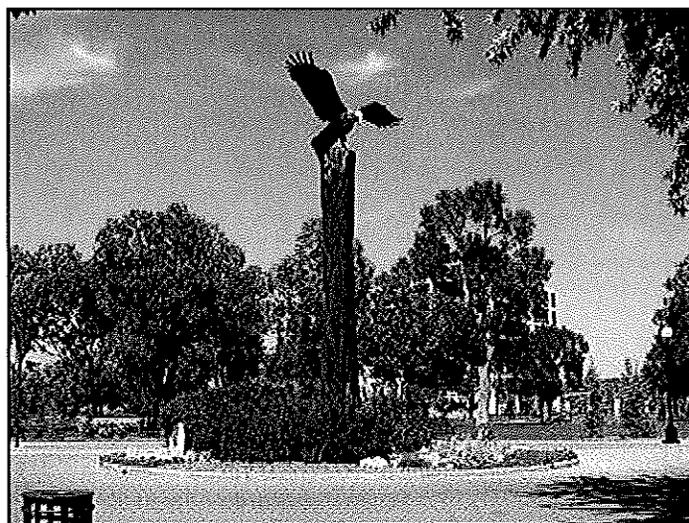
structure as a part of an overall review of the City's processes to determine possible improvements, etc. in the system.

- a. Continue the recent use of a "buddy system" to help guide development proposals through the process. The buddy system involves private partners helping a development or business request through the Council process.
 - b. Use the City's website to inform the community of meeting dates and times, who to turn to for questions and City Department responsibilities. A longer term action should include upgrading the City's website so that people can apply and pay for permits, pay bills and fees, etc. on-line.
2. Create a brochure/pamphlet to explain the Common Council process, the types of legislation handled by the various committees and the times of committee meetings.

Goal D. Market the assets of our community. Besides marketing La Crosse to other areas, an important aspect of marketing the community is an educational component which describes local business success stories and educates the community about what the City does to assist these local businesses in their growth and development.

Actions:

1. Market the Strategic Plan and the recommendations contained herein.
2. Develop and fund a comprehensive external marketing strategy, along with the necessary tools, to attract new jobs and people to La Crosse. This is presently being accomplished in conjunction with Downtown Mainstreet Inc. and Interact Communications.
3. Develop a comprehensive internal strategy to provide information to existing businesses concerning City economic development efforts and programs such as mailings, guest columns, etc.
4. Participate in regional marketing efforts, collaborate with other communities and find a way to pool resources together to market the Coulee Region.



The Eagle Statue in Downtown La Crosse's Riverside Park

Strategic Direction Number II -- Downtown Revitalization is Key for the Region. Historic Downtown La Crosse is the regional activity center for the greater La Crosse area, serving as the center for finance, communications, government, employment, culture, and entertainment. Since 1993 the City of La Crosse, Downtown Mainstreet Incorporated (DMI), and the private sector have been implementing the City Vision 2000 Master Plan for Downtown revitalization. A major goal of the Plan is to reestablish an emphasis on the Mississippi River and the role of the riverfront in the community. Since the adoption of the City Vision Plan there has been public and private investment of over \$130 million in Downtown La Crosse. The efforts of the last decade were rewarded in 2002 as the City and DMI received a 2002 Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for their successful efforts in Downtown revitalization through historic preservation.

As the City, DMI and the private sector enter the next phase of redevelopment and revitalization for Downtown, there are a number of goals the City should focus on:

Goal A. Fully utilize and improve the riverfront as a unique activity center.

Actions:

1. Support and coordinate with the City Vision 2020 Downtown Master Plan update to continue seeking opportunities for businesses and activities on the riverfront that bring people together such as restaurants, recreational, entertainment, and cultural uses.
2. Encourage the redevelopment of the area south of Piggy's restaurant into a mix of uses that could include a corporate headquarters, professional offices, restaurants, residential, entertainment, etc.
3. Continue connecting and extending the Riverwalk.
4. Establish better connections, both physical and visual between the Downtown and the Mississippi River.

Goal B. Promote the Downtown as a place to work, live, shop and play.

Actions:

1. Address the parking perception/situation by implementing the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee's recommendations including recommendations such as the "Park Smart" campaign for businesses and their employees, clear signage to direct drivers to ramps and lots and alternate parking areas, adding capacity to the Main Street and La Crosse Center ramps, and installing angle parking to name a few.
 - a. Identify methods for encouraging private businesses and educational institutions to create non-surface parking.
 - b. Negotiate leases with parking ramp users to require employee parking on the upper levels, leaving the lower levels for customers and visitors.
2. Continue developing the Downtown as an incubator for technology and related companies by working with companies such as First Logic, Logistics Health, and Financial and related industries.
3. Support and coordinate with DMI. Provide both technical and financial support.

4. Encourage businesses to advertise together (i.e. Downtown restaurants).
5. Encourage more outdoor seating and social activities.
6. Work with the local festivals to accommodate their needs and to encourage fest-goers into the Downtown.
7. Encourage the development of residential units. The upper floors of Downtown buildings are a vast untapped potential for creating additional housing units. Steps should be taken to ensure that these floors are made to be economically viable including the continued utilization of the City's Upper Floor Renovation Loan program and by reviewing building codes and permitting issues.
8. Implement the recently completed UW-Extension's Downtown La Crosse Retail Market Analysis Report.

Goal C. Make high priority Downtown redevelopment sites ready.

Actions:

1. Create information packets for each redevelopment site that contain contact and other relevant information, funding sources, and a list of approved uses for each site in strong partnership with the business community.

Redevelopment Sites:

The Blue Ribbon Committee has identified a number of properties in the Downtown that will be a high priority for redevelopment and reuse including:

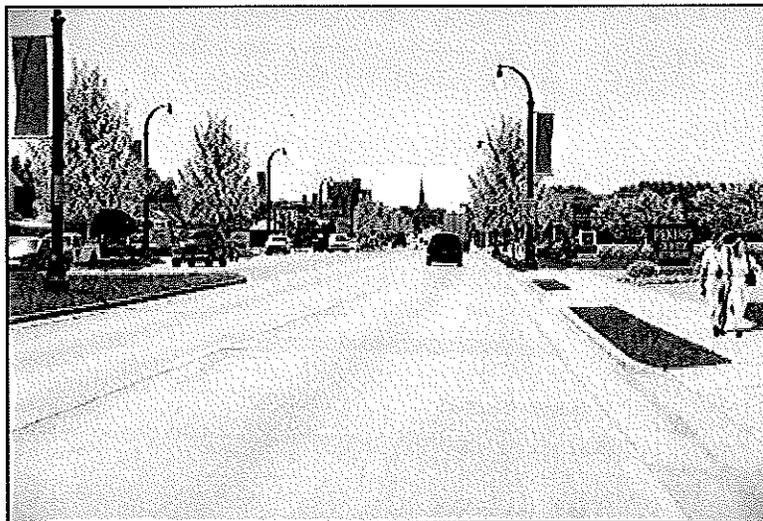
1. The Park Plaza site on Barron Island
2. The future Transit Center site
3. The area south of Piggy's restaurant
4. Xcel Energy site as a gateway to Downtown
5. The County-owned former Montgomery Ward's site
6. The Sara Lee warehouse/Machine Products/MAPCO buildings along 2nd Street
7. The warehouse at 2nd and King Streets
8. In addition, 5th Avenue South is mentioned for having the potential for becoming an arts district with the La Crosse Community Theatre, galleries and shops already located there. This issue should be explored through the City Vision 2020 Master Plan.

Strategic Direction Number III -- Development & Redevelopment Priorities. This section of the Strategic Plan looks geographically at the City and where and when various key sites should be developed and redeveloped, the importance of La Crosse's neighborhoods and transportation mobility. Because the City is bound by the bluffs and the river, the City must use its land resources and plan for transportation improvements very wisely and efficiently. The City should aggressively explore all available financing options for redeveloping the following sites including the use of condemnation, brownfield grants, and others.

Goal A. Complete the following tasks to make redevelopment sites ready.

Actions:

1. Develop information packets with vital information for each redevelopment property, including preferred land uses and design concepts. See the map on the following page for the locations of these sites.
 - a. Riverside Redevelopment Project (Causeway Area) including the Mobil Oil property.
 - b. La Crosse Footwear facilities.
 - c. Fleming facilities.
 - d. The area surrounding the Gundersen-Lutheran hospital complex.
 - e. Specific sites within the City's Tax Incremental Finance and Redevelopment Districts.
2. Sponsor a developer conference to promote La Crosse and these sites.
3. Develop an "area plan" for each development and redevelopment area and corridor to explore acceptable future uses, density and urban design issues. In order to improve urban design and corridor aesthetics, work to create a City-wide "Mainstreet" program for the City's commercial areas and corridors and complete a "First Impressions" study with UW-Extension.
 - a. Rose Street from Interstate 90 to Downtown La Crosse.
 - b. Ward Avenue corridor.
 - c. Mormon Coulee Road/South Avenue corridor.
 - d. North George Street.



A rendering of proposed improvements to Copeland Avenue

Goal B. Prioritize efforts to create and maintain vital neighborhoods in the City.

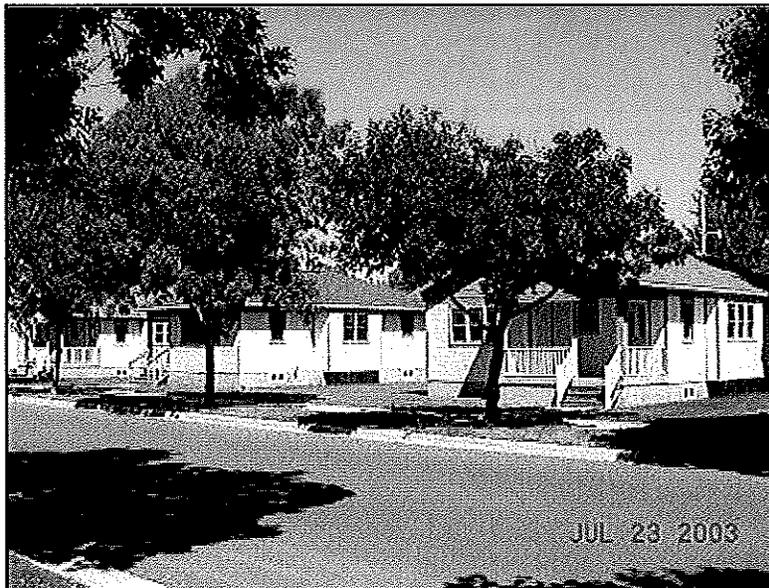
Actions:

1. Create a City commission that specifically addresses neighborhood revitalization in high-priority neighborhoods. An example of their duties could include:
 - a. Directing the implementation of the Neighborhood RENEW program (Restore Everyone's Neighborhood Effectively & Win).
 - b. Working with the neighborhood associations to implement the four neighborhood plans.
 - c. Helping to re-establish "anchor" businesses and small commercial centers in the neighborhoods.
 - d. Working and partnering with the local school district and schools.
 - e. Continuing support and celebration of neighborhood associations and neighborhoods through efforts such as the City's replacement housing and housing rehabilitation programs, Habitat for Humanity, Coulee Cap and events such as block parties.

2. Identify innovative neighborhood housing solutions such as:
 - a. Identifying areas for housing renewal that can include a mix of housing types in collaboration with local developers and realtors.
 - b. Creating a local non-profit housing redevelopment organization.
 - c. Encouraging walking by providing sidewalks, trails and other pedestrian amenities in all new development and redevelopment projects City-wide.

3. Focus on the Mormon Coulee area in the City for a new planning initiative, including Waterford Valley and Gerrard developments.

4. Build a neighborhood on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse campus for retirees. As an example, St. Mary's in Winona is completing a project like this.

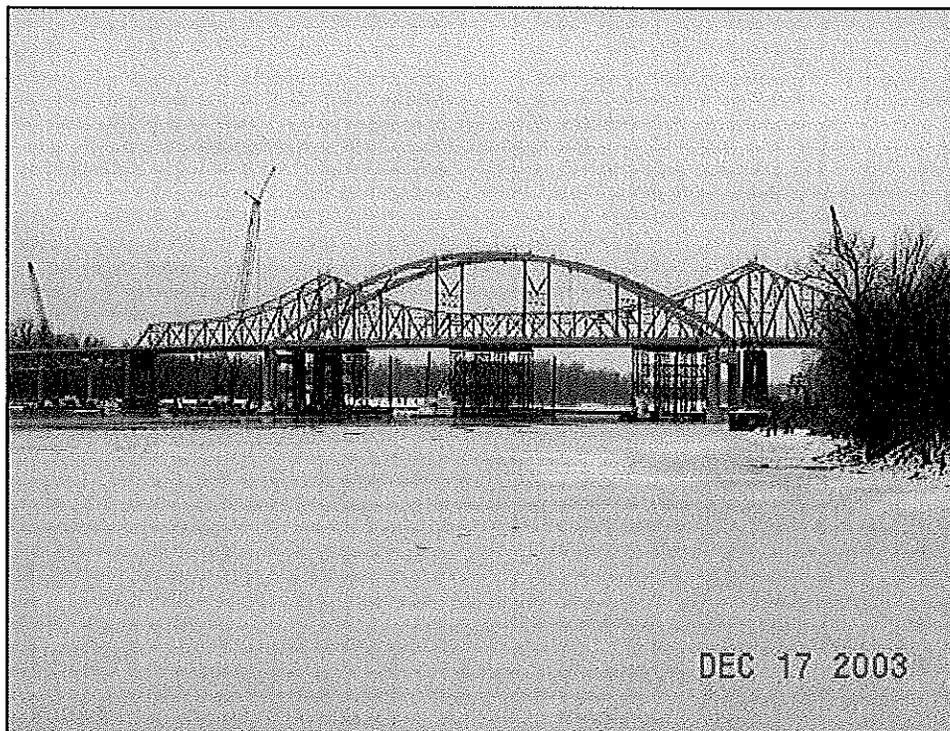


Tyler Street replacement houses

Goal C. Work to ensure transportation mobility.

Actions:

1. Support regional transportation solutions such as the Midwest Regional High Speed Rail Initiative, the expansion of and improvements to the La Crosse Mass Transit Utility, increased river transportation, and increased connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle trails and amenities.
2. Balance the need for street and highway expansions and widenings and their impacts with the critical importance of neighborhood preservation and the protection of La Crosse's neighborhood character.



Construction of the new Mississippi River Bridge

April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

<u>Implementation Action Grid</u>	<u>Timing & Responsibility</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>
<i>Business Sectors/Clusters:</i>		
Devote funding and technical assistance to local business clusters--coordinate the State's efforts and identify local needs	Immediate & CP	State of Wisconsin resources
Establish regular communication between the City and each local cluster group--establish regular meetings	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Existing resources
Research and track local economic information and trends	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Create & maintain database of vacant office space & info.	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
<i>Strategic Direction No. 1</i>		
<i>Create a service-oriented, can-do attitude:</i>		
Engage service and organizational expert/consultant to work with Mayor, City Council & City Executives	Immediate & M, CC, CE	\$25,000 in 2005 budget
Designate a point person who meets with the business community	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Create process for business inquiries and business issues	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Post information on the City's website	Immediate & CP, IST, L	Existing resources
Redesign the City's website to provide contact and program information, forms, meeting date/times	Immediate & CP, IST, L	Existing resources
Develop a way to measure progress	Mid-term & CP	Existing resources
Provide technical and financial assistance	On-going & M, CC, CE	Existing resources
Assist businesses in funding needs	Mid-term & CP	Existing resources
Continue providing incentives and other assistance	On-going & M, CC, CE	Existing resources
Meet with La Crosse School District officials	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Existing resources
Continue working with economic development agencies	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Create a manual for entrepreneurs	Mid-term & CP	\$5,000 in 2005 budget
<i>Improve communication with the community:</i>		
Establish better communication channels with the business community	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Host quarterly roundtable meetings with business clusters and Mayor, Council and City Executives	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Existing resources
Develop a regular City economic development newsletter	Mid-term & CP	Existing resources
Participate in regular local business group meetings	On-going & M, CC, CE	Existing resources

April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

<u>Implementation Action Grid</u>	<u>Timing & Responsibility</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>
Develop a media strategy	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Existing project with Interact
Implement Marketing Strategies & Tools	On-going & M, CP	Existing project with Interact
Develop press releases and packets	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Educate businesses and citizens about business assistance efforts	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Design and implement an annual City business awards program	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	\$500 in 2005 budget
Host a "Business After 5" like event at City Hall	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	\$500 in 2005 budget
<i>Streamline the Common Council approval process:</i>		
Study the common council process	Immediate & M, CC, CE	\$25,000 in 2005 budget (see previous item)
Continue the use of the buddy system to help development proposals through the process	On-going & Private	Existing resources
Use the City's website to inform about meeting dates/times, etc.	Mid-term & Clerk, IST, L	Existing resources
Create a brochure/pamphlet to explain the Common Council process	Mid-term & Clerk	\$500 in 2005 budget
<i>Market the assets of our community:</i>		
Market the Strategic Plan	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Develop external marketing strategies and tools	In process & CP	Existing project with Interact
Develop internal marketing strategies for existing businesses	In process & CP	Existing project with Interact
Participate in regional marketing efforts	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	New resources TBD in 2005

Timing:

Immediate will take place immediately up to one year.
 Mid-term will take place within the next one to two years.

Responsibility:

CC = Common Council

CE = City Executives

Clerk = City Clerk

CP = City Planning

IST = Information Services & Technology

L = Library

M = Mayor's Office

Private = Private sector

PU = Parking Utility

UW-L = Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse

April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

<u>Implementation Action Grid</u>	<u>Timing & Responsibility</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>
<i>Strategic Direction No. II</i>		
<i>Fully utilize and improve the Riverfront as a unique activity center:</i>		
Support and coordinate with the City Vision 2020 Master Plan	Mid-term & CP	Existing resources
Encourage the redevelopment of the Listman Mill site	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	Future capital budgets
Continue connecting and extending the Riverwalk	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	Future capital budgets
Establish better connections between the Downtown and the River	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	Future capital budgets
<i>Promote Downtown as a place to work, live, shop and play:</i>		
Address the parking perception/situation and implementation of Parking Advisory Committee's Report	Mid-term & PU	Future capital budgets
Continue the Downtown as incubator for technology -- meet with Downtown high-tech companies	On-going	Existing resources
Support and coordinate with DMI	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Future operating budgets
Encourage businesses to advertise together	Immediate & Private	Private resources
Encourage more outdoor activities	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Future operating budgets
Capitalize on the various festivals	Immediate & M, CC, CE	Future operating budgets
Encourage the development of residential units -- schedule informational sessions on historic building codes	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	Future capital budgets
Implement the retail market strategy	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	Future operating budgets
<i>Make high priority redevelopment sites ready:</i>		
Create information packets for each Downtown site in partnership with businesses	Immediate & CP	Existing resources

April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

<u>Implementation Action Grid</u>	<u>Timing & Responsibility</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>
<i>Strategic Direction No. III</i>		
<i>Complete the following tasks to make redevelopment sites ready:</i>		
Develop information packets	Immediate & CP	Existing resources
Riverside Redevelopment project		
La Crosse Footwear facilities		
Fleming facilities		
The area surrounding Gundersen-Lutheran		
Specific sites within TIF and Redevelopment Districts		
Sponsor a developer conference to promote La Crosse	Mid-term & CP, Private	\$5,000 in 2006 budget
Develop an area plan for each area/corridor including a City-wide Main Street program	Mid-term & CP, Private	Future operating budgets
Complete a "First Impressions" study with UW-Extension	Immediate & CP	Future operating budget
Rose Street from I-90 to Downtown		
Ward Avenue corridor		
Mormon Coulee Road/South Avenue corridor		
North George Street		
<i>Prioritize efforts to create and maintain vital neighborhoods in the City:</i>		
Create a Neighborhood Commission to address neighborhood revitalization	Mid-term & M, CC, CE	Future operating budgets
Identify innovative neighborhood housing solutions	On-going & CP, CE	Future capital & operating budgets
Focus on the Mormon Coulee area for a new planning initiative	Immediate & CP	Future operating budgets

Timing:

Immediate will take place immediately up to one year.
 Mid-term will take place within the next one to two years.

Responsibility:

CC = Common Council

CE = City Executives

Clerk = City Clerk

CP = City Planning

IST = Information Services & Technology

L = Library

M = Mayor's Office

Private = Private sector

PU = Parking Utility

UW-L = Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse

April 15, 2004 Recommended Plan

<u>Implementation Action Grid</u>	<u>Timing & Responsibility</u>	<u>Resources Needed</u>
Build a neighborhood on the UW-L campus	Mid-term & CP, UW-L	Future capital budgets
<i>Work to ensure transportation mobility.</i>		
Support regional transportation solutions	On-going	Future capital budgets
Balance the need for street expansion/widening with neighborhood preservation and protection of neighborhood character	On-going	Future capital & operating budgets

Timing:

Immediate will take place immediately up to one year.

Mid-term will take place within the next one to two years.

Responsibility:

CC = Common Council

CE = City Executives

Clerk = City Clerk

CP = City Planning

IST = Information Services & Technology

L = Library

M = Mayor's Office

Private = Private sector

PU = Parking Utility

UW-L = Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse



Town of Queen Creek

Economic Development Strategic Plan

October 2007

Town of Queen Creek Economic Development Strategic Plan

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Executive Summary	2
Queen Creek Today	4
Targeted Industry Sectors	6
Key Result Areas	8
Economic Development Investment Program	12
Economic Development Element	14
Queen Creek General Plan	
Town of Queen Creek Organizational Chart	22
Acknowledgements	23

Tables/Charts

1. Queen Creek Area Education
2. Queen Creek Area Workforce by Occupation
3. Employment in Queen Creek

Exhibits

1. Queen Creek Business, Including Home Based, By Type
2. 10-20-30 Minute Commute Shed
3. 10-20-30 Minute Commute Shed, % Population Change 2000-2006
4. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Executive Summary

In spring 1997, the Queen Creek Mayor and Council embarked on an aggressive effort to implement key industry segments and land uses identified in the General Plan. The Council appointed an Economic Development Commission to assist in creating a strategic plan and the **Queen Creek Strategic Plan for Economic Development** was adopted in January 2001.

To help provide strategy and perspective during a critical time in Queen Creek's growth an updated series of strategies and action items needed to be developed and implemented. To assist in this revision, the Economic Development Commission and Stakeholder group was appointed by Town Council in September 2006.

In September 2006 the Town Council also approved the proposed team approach facilitated by Salt River Project (Economic Development Department) for the revision to the plan. The Commission and Stakeholder group has been meeting monthly following a detailed work program.

The work program identified area issues, concerns and opportunities. Presentations on key issues, programs and ideas that impact Queen Creek and economic development were provided at various meetings. The Commission also reviewed demographic and statistical reports, developed an updated Economic Development Element for the General Plan, and conducted a detailed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) assessment, which helped shape the revised plan. A Town Council work study presentation was provided on June 20, 2007 to update Council Members on the focus of the plan, as well as providing an opportunity for staff to address any comments or concerns.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan addresses the need for Queen Creek to focus its marketing and recruitment efforts on specific and targeted industries to be more effective and efficient. Several clusters have emerged as an opportunity for Queen Creek:

1. Aerospace and Aviation
2. Health and Wellness Industry
3. Arts, Culture and Experience
4. Speciality, Lifestyle retail
5. Advanced Financial/Business Services
6. Education

Although the revised plan maintains the key components of the Strategic Plan adopted in 2001; a new section focused on eight key areas that tie directly to the Corporate Strategic Plan has been included. The Key Result Areas that were identified through the process need to be addressed simultaneously to ensure a well rounded approach to enhancing the community of Queen Creek. These include:

1. **Economic Development** – strengthen and diversify Queen Creek's economy.
2. **Labor Force and Education** – partner with the community schools, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Arizona State University at the Polytechnic campus to ensure that education supports the future of the community at large, residents and the development needs of business.

3. **Transportation** – work to attract business along major (planned) economic/transportation corridors. Capitalize on pass-through traffic from Pinal County.
4. **Real Estate Resources** – partner with land owners and developers to develop an inventory of improved sites and existing “speculative buildings” for employment uses.
5. **Utilities and Infrastructure** – consider installing or advancing infrastructure by the Town in key employment areas.
6. **Community Vision/Identity** – The Town of Queen Creek strives to honor our past, manage our present and engage our future to create a quality, unique place for family and business.
7. **Financial Resources** – Increase the Town’s sales tax base. Ensure the Town’s development costs for the private sector remain competitive.
8. **Business Climate** – Proactively work to promote the Town as a business friendly community. Work with the Community Development Department to establish consistent and competitive review timeframes and fees that are necessary and competitive to our neighboring communities.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan also includes a revised Economic Development **Investment Program**. This program is intended to guide Town Staff and Town Council decision-making when evaluating the expenditure of public funds for eligible development projects. Eligible projects will need to meet one or more of the established criteria and be subject to a thorough financial analysis to be considered for investment by the Town. The Investment Program also provides authorization to the Town Manager to waive fees or expend Town funds for project assistance. The Investment Program is intended to keep Queen Creek competitive with local jurisdictions and to streamline the development process; which is a critical factor is corporate site selection decision making.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is intended to guide economic development decisions and policies in Queen Creek and provide direction to staff to focus its marketing and recruitment efforts on specific and targeted industries. The Plan is a tool to balance the fiscal approach to land planning to ensure that the municipal budget is always balanced and meets the needs of the community. The Key Result Areas will focus on the broader goals of the community and work towards the creation of higher paying jobs, new employment creation and an excellent quality of life by building on the community assets already in place today.

Queen Creek Today

Demographics

Queen Creek is located in southeastern Maricopa County and a portion of northeastern Pinal County. With a current estimated population of 22,000, Queen Creek has experienced rapid growth over the last ten years. Build-out population is estimated at ± 90,365. The median age of Queen Creek residents is 30.9, which is lower than the Maricopa County average of 33.3. In terms of income, Queen Creek residents have a median household income of \$63,702, which is higher than the Maricopa County average of \$50,814. Detailed demographic information has also been provided for the Queen Creek trade area. 2006 estimates show a population of 363,044 within a 30-minute drive time of Ellsworth and Ocotillo.

Workforce

Queen Creek possesses a skilled, well educated workforce with concentration in the Office/Admin Support, Sales/Related, Production, Management and Construction categories.

Employment in Queen Creek is estimated at 4,098 jobs with a strong concentration in manufacturing and retail.

Economic Development

The strong residential growth in Queen Creek and in Pinal County has resulted in rapid growth in the retail sector. Within the next 12 months over 1.2 million square feet of retail space will be added to Queen Creek's inventory. However, there is an overall lack of available "shovel ready" sites, available spec buildings for prospective businesses and higher paying professional type jobs in the community.

The community does have large tracts of undeveloped, unimproved land suitable for large industrial sites, rail served distribution centers, high-tech business parks, data centers, call centers, back-office operations, entertainment venues. A lack of infrastructure to these large land tracts are an ongoing constraint to development.

The Power Marketplace Business Park and Inverness Industrial Park, offering fully-improved industrial lots, as well as the Queen Creek Professional Village offering office space for sale, has provided a limited supply of sites for businesses wanted to expand or locate in Queen Creek.

Detailed maps were provided showing the concentration of existing businesses (home based and non-home based) located within the community. Queen Creek has a strong base of home based businesses and businesses offering Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate services.

Transportation

The Town is accessed by major arterial roads which connect to the US 60 (the Superstition Freeway) and the State Route 202 (Santan Freeway) which connects to Interstate 10 and to the Phoenix Metro Area. Queen Creek lacks direct freeway access (5 miles to the north).

There are major traffic issues and congestion due to the pass through traffic originating in Pinal County. Queen Creek has an ambitious transportation improvement plan dedicating more than \$100 million for transportation and drainage components of the town's Capital

Improvement Plan. One proposed solution to road congestion is the Local Circulation Arterial Transportation Program (LCAT) and the Meridian Road project which will provide a proactive stance to further improve transportation for residents. The approach includes developing a program designed to address transportation needs of Arizona's smaller communities and urbanizing rural areas. The LCAT program would be focused on gateway and hyper-growth transportation issues found throughout the state.

The Union Pacific Railroad mainline serving Phoenix passes through the community. A rail spur serving Alliance Lumber is located north of Riggs Road.

Air transportation is provided by Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (approximately a one hour drive from Queen Creek). Queen Creek is a partner in the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority. Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport is located two miles north of Queen Creek's northern boundary, and recently participated in the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Study that addressed market potential of the 52-square mile study area. The observations and recommendations of the ULI Advisory Panel include:

- Over a 25 year planning horizon there will be a need in the study area for 1,575 acres of industrial land, 400 acres of office space and 500 acres of retail space.
- 5,250 hotel rooms at 34 sites on 105 acres and 7 golf courses on 1,400 acres should be included in the plans.
- Higher educational facility demands are twice what are now planned for 320 acres. Two hospital sites with 175 beds each are needed along with other medical facilities.
- The study area at build out – 165,000 residents, nearly 70,000 students at institutions of higher education and jobs for 94,000 people.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Queen Creek has existing capacities in the wastewater treatment system to meet future demand based on land uses in the 2002 General Plan. Any amendments to the General Plan require a detailed analysis of the overall impact on the Town's infrastructure to determine Queen Creek's ability to serve the project.

Telecommunications Initiatives for Queen include issues of growth & density, municipal services, economic development and quality of life as it pertains to broadband and telecommunications.

Traffic and IT collectively developed engineering standards for conduit placement. Traffic, Capital Improvement Plan and IT are the primary movers on the fiber and wireless project. Currently the Town is working on Fiber Design, Wireless Design, the ITS Master Plan and Codes and Ordinances related to the telecommunication initiatives.

Targeted Industry Sectors

Regional Targeted Industry Sectors

Queen Creek needs to focus its marketing and recruitment efforts on specific and targeted industries to be more effective and efficient.

The Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC), the economic development organization for the region, focuses its marketing efforts on the following industry clusters:

- Aerospace and Aviation
- Advanced Financial/Business Services
- Bio-Industry (includes medical)
- High-Tech
- Software

Considering the strengths of the region as identified by GPEC, the findings of the Queen Creek SWOT analysis and the community feedback from the General Plan Update - Economic Development Focus Group, several clusters have emerged as an opportunity for Queen Creek:

Queen Creek Targeted Industry Sectors

Aerospace and Aviation

The Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport is expected to develop into a major aviation related employment hub for the East Valley, and the entire state of Arizona. Since Queen Creek is a member of the Airport Authority and located within one mile of the airport, the potential for Queen Creek to benefit from the growth in this area is a tremendous opportunity for the Town. Key industries in this cluster could include:

- Aerospace related manufacturing
- Aerospace R&D
- Aviation related schools
- Air cargo – specialized logistics distribution hubs
- Other aviation related businesses
- Aerospace testing (electronics)
- Maintenance related operations

Aerospace manufacturing and Aerospace R&D companies look for the proximity of a key customer base and other aerospace industries, presence of an airport and aviation activity in the area and the availability of engineering schools for recruitment.

Health & Wellness Industry

The planned development of the Banner Health and Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) medical facilities in Queen Creek and in neighboring Pinal County positions the Town to attract medical support services to complement these facilities. Opportunities include:

- An additional medical facility as the community continues to grow
- Medical offices and support services
- Medical testing and analysis facilities.
- Medical wet lab space
- Bio-Informatics

- Wellness opportunities; Exercise and Nutrition

Arts, Culture and Experience

With the proximity of the Town to the airport, Arizona State University at the Polytechnic campus and the continued growth in both the Town and northern Pinal County, Queen Creek will work to develop a successful and vibrant Town Center as well as a distinctive environment to attract visitors and businesses to the community. Focus in this area would include:

- Retail
- Performing arts
- Destination recreation areas; ecotourism locations
- Specialty restaurants, theaters and hotels
- Tourism; resort development
- Cultural Arts District

Specialty retail/Lifestyle retail

Retail is a major sales tax generator and is an important part of a balanced community. Specialty retail or lifestyle retail will focus on retail businesses that compliment the big box, national tenant retail sector.

- Independently owned retail, service and restaurant businesses.
- Businesses that feature a unique product/service within a niche market.

Advanced Financial/Business Services

With the make-up of workforce in Queen Creek and our surrounding area the growth potential in this group is significant. In addition to local demand, 24% of all GPEC prospects have been in this high-wage industry. Focus in this area would include:

- Businesses which provide services such as accounting, billing, preparing financial statements.
- High-end back office and call center operations.
- Regional and corporate headquarters

Education

Queen Creek is currently served by Arizona State University at the Polytechnic Campus, Chandler-Gilbert Community College at the Williams Campus and Central Arizona College. The lack of higher educational facilities located directly within the community as well as the lack of private postsecondary education institutions in an area as large as metro Phoenix presents an opportunity for Queen Creek. Focus in this area includes:

- *Attracting a satellite campus and/or higher education private school campus to the community.*
- *Attracting specialty, technical schools and/or programs to expand education resources available in the community, region and state.*

Key Result Areas

The Queen Creek Strategic Plan is developed around eight key areas. These key areas were identified through the discussions of the Economic Development Commission and Stakeholder group and clearly outlined in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) matrix. To effectively position Queen Creek with other communities in the Phoenix metropolitan area, and be competitive nationwide and globally the Town will need to focus time, attention and resources to Key Result Areas. Each of these areas needs to be addressed simultaneously as they represent a well rounded approach to enhancing the community of Queen Creek. These include:

1. Economic Development
2. Labor Force and Education
3. Transportation
4. Real Estate - Available Sites/Buildings
5. Utilities and critical infrastructure
6. Community Vision/Identity
7. Financial Resources
8. Business Climate

Economic Development: Strengthen and diversify Queen Creek's economy.

Objectives:

- Identify unique market niches and targeted business clusters that the Town can successfully attract.
- Increase the number of high-wage and professional level jobs in the community. Increase marketing efforts to attract anchor employment institutions and encourage them to locate in Queen Creek.
- Facilitate the development of additional retail and entertainment centers through changes to the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
- Facilitate the development of the community's first regional mall through General Plan, Code Amendments and marketing efforts.
- Develop a vibrant and successful Town Center. The Town Center is a key economic core for the community. Implement and update as needed the Redevelopment Plan in Town Center.
- Attract entertainment anchors for the community as a catalyst for specialty retail, restaurants and hotel (resort) development.
- Evaluate options for implementing a foreign trade zone on the northern tier employment/industrial properties south of Germann Road corridor and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.
- Collaborate with communities and entities that are part of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Trade Area on common issues and opportunities that will affect the long term economic viability of the area.
- Communicate regularly with developers, brokers and industry leaders/decision makers.
- Continue to participate and partner with the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC), the Arizona Department of Commerce (ADOC), North Eastern Pinal Economic Partnership (NEPEP), Arizona Association for Economic Development (AAED).

- Professional memberships and participation in strategic events with International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), Urban Land Institute (ULI), International Economic Development Council (IEDC), East Valley Partnership (EVP).
- Work with the Chamber to continually refine and grow the Small Business Development Center and small business resources.

Labor Force and Education: Partner with the community schools, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Arizona State University at the Polytechnic campus, Central Arizona College, to ensure that education supports the future of the community at large, residents and the development needs of business.

Highly skilled workers have become the critical factor of economic growth and industry now follows workers. While education is not a service that Town government provides, it is still necessary to be an advocate for education improvements and consistency.

Objectives:

- Continue to strengthen (K-12) schools; work to gain the reputation of the best schools in the state.
- Regularly meet with school leaders to understand their needs and challenges.
- Actively pursue and seek to locate a satellite campus and institutions of higher learning to the community.
- Document labor force availability (Conduct labor force study if needed.)
- Develop occupational skill sets that are transferable among industry clusters and encourage local educators to develop programs to meet the needs.

Transportation: Work to attract business along major (planned) economic/transportation corridors. Capitalize on pass-through traffic from Pinal County.

Objectives:

- Identify appropriate land uses along economic corridors.
- Work to obtain right-of-way for future transportation corridors and coordinate with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) on the timing of these corridors.
- Develop a plan for connecting Meridian Road to the proposed Gateway Freeway (802 Freeway).
- Relative to transportation corridors, continue to evaluate the expansion of the planning area, north of German Road to the south side of the future Gateway freeway alignment, between Meridian Road and the CAP canal.

Real Estate Resources: Partner with land owners and developers to develop an inventory of improved sites and existing “speculative buildings” for employment uses.

Objectives:

- Participate in the GPEC Certified and Shovel Ready programs.
- Work to increase office inventory, as the southeast valley is deficient in available office space.
- Review financing options for private real estate development consistent with plan.

Utilities and Infrastructure: Consider installing or advancing infrastructure by the Town in key employment areas.

- Proactively work with Transportation and Public Works to install or advance infrastructure to town's main employment area in the "northern tier" and regional commercial center at Meridian and Riggs roads to facilitate development of these economic centers.
- Support plans for the improvement of telecommunications, **as well as other key infrastructure**, in existing and planned economic corridors.
- Support plans and promote the re-use of effluent from the waste water treatment facility.

Community Vision/Identity: The Town of Queen Creek strives to honor our past, manage our present and engage our future to create a quality, unique place for family and business.

- Enhance the recreational and cultural attributes of the community to attract and retain the "knowledge worker."
- Promote the Town's quality of life amenities including the parks, trails and open spaces, lower density development, distinctive housing, including executive style housing, equestrian opportunities and arts programs.
- Promote existing cultural, unique venues; Schnepf Farms, The Olive Mill, Queen Creek Performing Arts Center (QCPAC), Horseshoe Equestrian Centre. Facilitate a Farmer's Market in the community.
- Develop an Economic Development Department Marketing Strategy in coordination with the Communications and Marketing department that defines major messages that are used in developing all economic development focused promotional materials, information packets, etc.

Financial Resources: Increase the Town's sales tax base.
Ensure the Town's development costs for the private sector remain competitive.

- Prepare a cost/benefit analysis of the Town's planning areas to protect the community's fair share of retail within the region.
- Follow Economic Development Investment Guidelines when evaluating projects with respect to expenditure of public funds.

Business Climate: Proactively work to promote the Town as a business friendly community. Work with the Community Development Department to establish consistent and competitive project review timeframes and fees that are necessary and competitive to our neighboring communities.

- Adopt a policy on expedited plan review that includes business assistance to projects (ombudsman).
- Establish a ready response team with appropriate representatives to answer preliminary questions about the community and the process involved to establish a business in the community.
- Formalize the project review process implemented with the recent commercial projects in the Town Center.
- Developed expedited permitting process for targeted sectors. (GPEC Certified)

- In conjunction with the Redevelopment Area Plan and the Town Center Plan refine the investment program outlining specific criteria used to evaluate the expenditure of public funds and the types of project investments that may be considered.
- Continue partnership with the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce and enhance small business resources for independent businesses.

Economic Development Investment Program

The Queen Creek Economic Development Investment Program is intended to guide Town Staff and Town Council decision-making when evaluating the expenditure of public funds for eligible development projects.

Eligible projects will meet one or more of the following **criteria**:

- Economic Development will be substantially furthered by waiving the fees, expenditure of funds or rebate of sales taxes.
- The project will expand and diversify the economic base of the Town.
- The project will generate revenue for municipal services.
- The waiving of fees, expenditure of the funds or rebate of sales taxes will assist in the creation or retention of high wage (above the county average wage) jobs in the Town or will otherwise improve or enhance the economic welfare of the residents of the Town.
- The project is within one of the Town's targeted business clusters.
- The project is within the Town's established Redevelopment Area.
- Contribute to the long-term environmental sustainability of the Town, example LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certified projects.
- The project will produce a unique or competitive economic advantage for the Town
- The benefits the Town will receive from the commercial or industrial project outweigh the costs to the Town as demonstrated through the Town's fiscal impact analysis model.

The Town of Queen Creek may consider the following project investments subject to a thorough financial analysis:

- Waive any or all of the following fees required to be paid in connection with a commercial or industrial project – Planning & Zoning filing fees, engineering review fees, plan check and building permit fees.
- Enter into a written agreement whereby the Town shall contribute to the costs of public infrastructure, as determined by the Town Manager, which are required to be constructed in connection with a commercial or industrial project. (financial assistance for curb cuts, driveways in the public right-of-way, water/sewer extensions, drainage improvements)
- Initiate the process of applying for federal and state economic development grants, low interest loans and job training programs through partner agencies.
- Financing through Improvement Districts or Commercial Facilities Districts.
- Expedite plan review.

For projects locating in the Redevelopment Area the Town may consider:

- Enter into a written agreement to use available state incentive programs for Redevelopment Areas.

- Expedite permit issuance, including commitments for permits at foundation stage.

In addition, if a project meets one or more of the above criteria, the Town Manager is authorized to waive fees or expend Town funds for project assistance up to \$100,000 for a single project.

The Town Manager is authorized to waive any or all of the following fees required to be paid in connection with a commercial or industrial project: plan review fees, inspection fees, water extension costs, sewer connection costs.

Enter into a written agreement whereby the Town shall construct or expend Town funds to pay the costs of construction of off-site improvements, as determined by the Manager, which are required to be constructed in connection with a commercial or industrial project, waive or pay all or a portion of water and/or sewer development fees in connection with the construction of a commercial or industrial project or

Rebate all or a portion of the sales taxes generated by construction of improvements on the property by the commercial or industrial project.

Economic Development Element of the Queen Creek General Plan

The *Economic Development Element* provides Economic Development goals and policies that support land use policies of the Plan. The element forms the policy support for the Town's Strategic Plan for Economic Development.

Vision

The Town of Queen Creek will become a preferred business location promoting a competitive business climate while preserving the unique residential character and the agricultural and equestrian heritage of the community through unique design and high development standards.

Goals

1. To increase the economic wealth of the community and maintain and enhance property values.
2. Partner with the private sector to build an economically and environmentally sustainable community.
3. Maintain the essence of our agricultural/equestrian heritage and reflect this heritage in the design and construction of all new public and private facilities.
4. Promote development in accordance with the goals, policies and direction of the Town's General Plan.
5. Focus on developing the following:
 - a. A **distinct and unique image** for the Town that capitalizes on the existing image and history of the community.
 - b. Development that enhances and is compatible with Queen Creek's unique image.
 - c. A **successful and vibrant Town Center** that includes a mix of retail, office, educational and related uses along with higher density residential.
 - d. A growing, **reliable base of retail and service businesses** sufficient to meet the long term forecasted needs of the Town and its market area to provide the services desired by residents.
 - e. Access to residential areas and businesses through a **functional, attractive and adequate street system** designed to incorporate non-vehicular modes, landscaping and adequate right of way to preserve the options for additional improvements as may be needed in the future.
 - f. A commitment to the Town's long term **maintenance of the economic development goals** the community has established.
 - g. Visionary community participation and leadership to build a public consensus on the need for – and importance of – **successful economic development to the future success of the Town.**
 - h. Attractive, unique, inviting and comfortable parks, plazas, trails and open spaces that will draw attention to the unique **quality of life** the town offers and as a location in which to live and invest.
 - i. **Varying residential densities** of attractive and high quality housing in the Town Center, as part of mixed use developments, and in other areas compatible with existing surrounding residential uses which would help promote the unique design and character of the Town.

- j. Attract and grow sufficient **high wage employment opportunities** and knowledge based businesses to ensure diverse jobs are available within the Town.

Economic Sustainability

- a. The Town will become economically self-sustainable by generating income from local sources (sales taxes and development fees and others), state and federal shared revenues that will be sufficient to provide (and maintain) the levels of service our residents desire.
- b. Alternative revenue streams will be developed to augment and supersede the Town's current revenues from sales tax on new construction when these revenues begin to decline as the community builds out.
- c. Sufficient land area will be identified in the General Plan (particularly along economic corridors) to provide locations for the retail, office and employment uses needed to meet future demand and help generate the long-term revenues for the Town.
- d. A priority will be placed on the attraction of smaller, leading edge, knowledge based businesses which have the potential to grow significantly in the future.
- e. The Town's job to population ratio will be greater than the Maricopa County average when the community builds out.
- f. The Town will be regionally competitive in the attraction of new employment opportunities.
- g. Development "investment programs" will be considered for exceptional projects of interest to the Town.
- h. Development of additional public/private partnerships to design, finance and construct the infrastructure needed to support new employment uses.
- i. Infill office, specialty and commercial uses will be encouraged where appropriate to do so to obtain the maximum benefit from the town's infrastructure investment.

Economic Center Cultivation

1. Northern Tier employment area – south of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

- a. Protect area from residential development; within the noise contours of the Airport.
- b. Capitalize on the secondary economic benefits of proximity to the Airport. Development opportunities for hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, office complexes, warehousing, aviation related businesses, specialty uses and to the similar commercial and employment activities.
- c. Identify targeted industries that are feasible/desirable for this area and provide the critical infrastructure to support the end users.
- d. Market Queen Creek to businesses/employers that want to be near the airport but not necessarily at the airport.
- e. Promote the Town as the most attractive community and residential choice for employees at the airport and in surrounding employment areas.

2. The Town Center

- a. Will be developed to reflect the agricultural/equestrian/historical heritage of the town in the design and construction of future uses.

- b. Will become home to an attractive mixture of smaller commercial activities, professional offices and higher density residential projects producing an attractive and unique urban ambiance in a suburban community.
- c. Public services (parks, municipal buildings, library, post office, etc.) will be located in the Town Center to foster the historic Town Center concept.
- d. Non-vehicular transportation will be encouraged by development of a design theme which includes equestrian and mixed use paths, bicycle facilities, pedestrian amenities, unique streetscape design and building use and appearance to produce an attractive and distinctive urban environment.

3. Meridian/Riggs Regional Commercial Center

- a. Proactively work with the development team to ensure that the Regional Commercial Center is developed in a way that is different from, yet complements the development of the Town Center.
- b. Focus on the infrastructure needs of the project – roads, sewer, water – and the timing of the project phases as market trends and demands require.

4. Economic Corridors

- a. The major transportation corridors through the Town will also become major employment corridors, in order to take advantage of the traffic volume they carry and the exposure they offer the adjacent properties.
- b. The Employment Corridors where expanded employment opportunities will be focused include:
 - **Germann Road** – Developed as a six lane “route of regional significance” in Maricopa County to serve primarily employment and warehousing uses both in Mesa and Queen Creek
 - **Riggs Road** – Developed as a six lane “route of regional significance” to carry a significant traffic volume between Pinal County and I-10
 - **Power Road** – A six lane arterial serving primarily as a “commuter road” for existing and proposed residential developments, and residential commercial uses serving the adjacent residential areas.
 - **Ellsworth Road** – The primary existing north-south arterial road serving the town is re-routed to support commercial uses north of the Town Center and narrowed further south to support specialty commercial and governmental uses in the Town Center.
 - **Meridian Road** – The primary access road between Pinal County and the Gateway Freeway (802 Freeway). This six lane limited access road in addition to accommodating a significant traffic volume will be developed as a major route for commercial uses between the Gateway Freeway and the regional mall at Riggs Road.
 - The **south side of the Gateway Freeway (802 Freeway)** east of Meridian Road will be developed for employment uses within the town at the Meridian Road, Ironwood Road, Kenworthy Road and Schnepf Road intersections.

Distinctive Community Identity & Quality of Life

- a. Queen Creek desires to develop and maintain a community with a distinctive image - different than the rest of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

- b. The Town's unique heritage, construction standards, quality of life and community image will be used to promote development of additional projects which also reflect these standards.
- c. Minimize the impact of new development projects on the natural environment – and encourage use of innovative technologies to achieve this goal.
- d. Promote the town's quality of life amenities including the school systems, parks, trails and open spaces, lower density development pattern, distinctive housing, equestrian opportunities and arts programs as attractions to encourage residential and employment investment.

Commercial Development

- a. Commercial, office and employment projects will reflect the Town's emphasis on unique construction which reflects distinctive architecture and site planning.
- b. Understand and respond to the needs of Home-Based Businesses.
- c. The Town will place a priority of recruiting the following types of commercial uses to the community:
- d. One of a kind projects commercial and entertainment projects intended to serve the entire East Valley.
- e. Smaller "boutique" type hotel, office and commercial uses will also be encouraged to locate in the Town.
- f. "High profile" commercial, health care, service and employment opportunities.
 - Development of a regional hospital at Meridian and Riggs roads.
 - Attraction of health care providers in conjunction with the hospital.
 - Promotion of the Town as a health care center for Pinal County residents.
 - Larger commercial projects such as regional malls, "power centers," hospitals, auto dealers, as well as the more specialized upper end commercial uses and services will be appropriately located to serve both Town and Pinal County residents.
- g. Additional targeted economic clusters which are compatible with the vision and goals of the Town.
- h. The Town will recruit higher end resorts, retailers, services and promote the development of additional unique "move up" housing to strengthen the community image as being a distinctive upscale "regional hub" for the East Valley

Residential Development

- a. Residential subdivisions and developments will reflect quality design and construction, unique architecture, interesting site planning and a distinctive ambiance.
- b. Higher density residential projects will be considered at appropriate locations and will be expected to reflect the design, quality and appearance of the Town's heritage in their architecture, site planning and public presentation.
- c. Mixed use and mixed density projects will be considered in the Town Center and as parts of mixed use developments, when in keeping with the Town's rural/equestrian design theme.

- d. Development of all remaining large (1+ acre) equestrian lots will be supported and encouraged.
- e. Residential development in the San Tan foothills will reflect and complement the Sonoran Desert environment of the area through hillside sensitivity, xeriscaping, use of indigenous plant materials and distinctive housing types and designs.
- f. Complete a cost/benefit analysis before annexing new areas.

Utilities and Infrastructure

- a. The Town will invest in the creation of development related infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, drainage, etc) sufficient to meet projected future needs of the community – and as a statement of the commitment of the Town for private investment.
- b. The Town will partner with property owners to provide the infrastructure and resources needed to allow employment areas to be developed in a timely manner to accommodate employment opportunities
- c. The Town will work with the private sector to facilitate extension of wastewater service and transportation improvements to the employment center south of Germann Road and east of Ellsworth Road.
- d. Telecommunications
 - i. Development of enhanced fiber and wireless systems.
 - ii. Encourage establishment of telecommuting, and knowledge based home businesses.
 - iii. Promote development of additional internet capacity and “next-generation” telecommunications services.

Arts, Culture, Experience – Visitor/Entertainment

- a. Quality business hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues will be located in areas adjacent to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the Arizona State University at the Polytechnic campus.
 - i. Promote the Town’s proximity to the Polytechnic campus to attract the following - hotels and restaurants, office complexes, entertainment venues, theaters and similar uses
 - ii. The amenities and services available in the Town are actively marketed to University employees and students to encourage their use of Town facilities as a preferred location for the services, facilities and activities they may require.
 - iii. Promote the Town as the most attractive community and residential choice for employees at the University and Community Colleges.
- b. Boutique full service resorts and conference facilities which complement the agricultural, equestrian and desert heritage will be encouraged to locate in areas where they can benefit from the Town’s distinctive assets.
- c. Encourage unique, independently owned retail, restaurants and service providers.
- d. Promote unique facilities such as Schnepf Farms, The Olive Mill, SanTan Regional Park and Horseshoe Park.
- e. Continue to support Queen Creek Performing Arts Center and encourage development of a cultural arts district.

Public Services

- a. The Town will take proactive steps to expand the water and wastewater infrastructure of the community to meet the needs of additional employment uses.
- b. The “traditional” services provided by the Town (police, fire, library, building permit issuance, recreational facilities, cultural and public service program, etc.) will adequately support the residential growth and employment activities which will be attracted to the community.
- c. Street maintenance, building maintenance and parks maintenance will reflect the Town’s commitment to maintaining a safe and functional public realm.

Education

- a. The proximity of the Town to the Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Central Arizona College, ASU at the Polytechnic campus and the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) will be promoted as a community asset.
- b. The Town, the Queen Creek Unified School District and other school districts represented in the community, will coordinate their efforts to support development of an outstanding K-12 program that enhances the community’s attractiveness to residents
- c. The potential for attracting a higher education facility, such as a branch of campus of Chandler-Gilbert Community College, or a new private four year institution

Development Standards

- a. Town development standards will promote construction of distinctive employment and residential projects with architectural and site designs unique to the Town
- b. New projects will reflect the Town’s western territorial, Spanish colonial, old pueblo and Victorian hybrid design themes
- c. Use of reclaimed water as a project amenity will be encouraged
- d. The Town’s development standards are updated, equitable, and easily understood – and facilitate the timely processing of new projects
- e. New commercial and employment oriented uses will reflect architectural treatments unique to the Town.
- f. Development standards for re-use of properties and unique venues will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Transportation and Circulation

- a. A system of arterials (4 lane) streets have been developed on all existing “section line” streets, where ever possible given the alignment of the railroad and Queen Creek
- b. Meridian Road, Ellsworth Road, Power Road, Riggs Road and Germann Road have been developed into major (6 lane) arterial streets and carry significant amount of traffic.
- c. Meridian Road will become a “super arterial” street (6 lanes, dedicated right and left turn lanes, limited local access and spaced traffic signals) in order to carry a significant amount of through traffic from Pinal County.
- d. A significant resource base has been secured to develop the transportation system the Town requires to accommodate both the local traffic the town generates, plus the through traffic from Pinal County. Local resources will include bonding and private partnerships. Regional assistance will include funding from Maricopa County and the State of Arizona.
- e. Plans have been made to accommodate future multi-modal transportation alternatives with the arterial street right-of-way, to provide for additional forms of transportation as needed.

- f. The Town's existing and proposed multi-use trail systems for equestrian, walking and bicycling has been developed with linkages throughout the town and to the San Tan Mountain Regional Park, and are a widely recognized as a unique community asset. (as included in the Park, Trails and Open Space plan)
- g. Arterial street rights-of-way are standardized at 140' to allow space to accommodate six lane streets, locations for utility services and adequate landscaping
- h. Ironwood Road, Kenworthy Road and Schnepf Roads will be developed as arterial streets within the Town Planning Area and Town limits.
- i. Access from the Town to the airport and the university has been upgraded to provide the same level of access provided by Mesa and Gilbert.

Utilization of Land

- a. Sufficient land area has been designated in the General Plan to provide locations to accommodate the types of employment uses anticipated to locate in the Town and meet the employment expectations of the community.
- b. Maintain the aircraft over flight areas, as approved by the Town, off the southeast ends of the runways at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport for non-residential uses, as shown in the General Plan.
- c. Consideration of the transitional issues between employment areas adjacent to residential areas has been incorporated into the development approval process for both uses. Transitional issues may include limiting access, setbacks, screening, landscaping, building design, site orientation, window placement, reorientation of loading and storage areas among others.

Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation

- a. The Town's parks, trails, open space and recreational facilities will exceed regional standards and will be used as an attraction for economic development recruitment purposes. Work to maintain access to attractive vistas, natural areas, open space and the Queen Creek and Sonoqui washes.
- b. The Town's recreational programs will reflect the Town's commitment to a superior recreational experience that will distinguish it from other communities in the area as a distinctive environment for investment.
- c. The Town will work with Maricopa County to enhance the appearance, functionality, preservation and marketing of the San Tan Regional Park as a distinctive community and regional asset.

Costs of Development

- a. The costs associated with providing the public facilities and services needed to accommodate to new construction will be recovered through use of development related fees and charges.
- b. Town development costs to the private sector will remain competitive relative to the impact fees of other communities.
- c. Major public capital investments will be initiated by the Town in conjunction with the private sector when needed to accommodate new development projects. (Reference the Public Investment Policy in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.)

Population Demographics

- a. The Town's strong demographics – *high median income levels and a median age lower than the Maricopa County average* - will be promoted when recruiting new commercial uses and employers.
- b. Workforce – Queen Creek has a skilled, well-educated workforce with concentration in the Office/Admin Support, Sales Related, Production, Management and Construction categories.
- c. Understand the relationship between retail density and residential density and the location of certain retail services.
- d. Balance of retail – national and/or local chains vs. independent, more unique retail businesses.

Acknowledgments

The Queen Creek Economic Development Strategic Plan was prepared in consultation with the Economic Development Commission and Stakeholder group with facilitation from Jim Nelson with Salt River Project (SRP).

Economic Development Commission

Gordon Mortensen, Chair
Toni Valenzuela, Vice Chair
Dr. James Murlless
Dr. Albert McHenry
Paul Gardner
Vince Davis
David Valenzuela
Mary Ann Guerra
Mark Schnepf
Kevin Peterson
Jason Barney
Steve Sossaman
Roseann Sweet

Stakeholders

Maria Hesse/John Schroeder
Rick Hansen
Bob Salmon
Rod Bassett
Jennifer Mayer
Jose Esparza
Rustyn Sherer
Sandie Smith
Scot Rigby

Queen Creek Town Council

Arthur Sanders, Mayor
Gail Barney, Vice Mayor
Joyce Hildebrandt
Toni Valenzuela
Lisa Coletto-Cohen (former Vice Chair of the Economic Development Commission)
Jon Wootten
Gordon Mortensen

Staff and Consultants

John Kross, Town Manager
Tom Condit, Community Development Director
Doreen Cott, Economic Development Director
Jim Nelson
Wayne Balmer

TABLES/CHARTS

Education

Queen Creek Area Education

2006 POPULATION EDUCATION	25+ BY	10-Minute	20-Minute	30-Minute
		16,971	60,545	222,962
Doctorate Degree		20	238	1,449
Professional School Degree		100	314	2,237
Master's Degree		633	3,289	12,990
Bachelor's Degree		2,166	10,018	40,272
Associate Degree		1,273	4,930	19,278
Some College, No Degree		5,025	18,401	66,331
High School Graduate (include equiv.)		4,173	13,430	50,815
Some High School, No Diploma		1,838	5,520	17,928
<9 th Grade		1,743	4,405	11,662

Source: Claritas, 2006

Workforce

Queen Creek Area Workforce by Occupation

2006 POPULATION 16+ BY OCCUPATION	10-Minute	20-Minute	30-Minute
	14,147	47,059	163,643
Office/Admin Support	2,244	7,397	26,361
Sales/Related	1,301	4,989	20,080
Production	1,271	2,820	9,734
Mgmt excl Farmers	1,232	5,288	18,418
Construction/Extraction	975	3,066	9,039

Source: Claritas, 2006

EXHIBITS

QUEEN CREEK SWOT Analysis

Queen Creek Economic Scenarios	Strengths	Opportunities	Weaknesses	Threats	Initiatives
General Community Characteristics					
Location	<p>"Southeastern-most area Town; "Gateway to Pinal County;" Near Williams Gateway complex (Airport, ASU-Poly, CGCC); Available (lower cost) Land;</p>	<p>WGA related development; Several potential Emp. Centers. Access to natural areas & open space. Recreation potential at San Tan Reg. Park. Ellsworth Rd commercial corridor. UPRR passes thru.</p>	<p>Lack of direct Freeway access in Town limits; Pass-thru traffic congestion; Distance from Downtown Phx & Sky Harbor; Lack critical mass for many services; no county or state roads.</p>	<p>Development could leapfrog; Lack control in County Islands; Annexation of nearby land & Utility svc. by Mesa or Florence; Small, remote & may lack influence with Maricopa or Pinal City; Superstition Vistas; more relaxed county regulations; Gilbert/Mesa employment areas.</p>	
Quality of Life	<p>Great place to live! Queen Creek = Quality Choices! Unique character. Schnepf Farms. Attractive vistas, open feel. Friendly neighbors. Performing arts center w/quality acts. Variety of housing choices. Developing retail venues provide positive momentum.</p>	<p>Continue to attract new residents based on community character & lifestyle; enhance unique. Box Canyon - upscale. Build on access to strong K-12, ASU, CGCC. Diverse housing types. Use Arts/Culture as magnet. Healthcare related devimm. QC Wash potential. Planned amenities in TC. Seek unique retail with tie to Recreation & Entertainment venues.</p>	<p>Residents have to drive long distances to work; Commercial amenities lacking; Telecom infrastructure; lack of jobs; amenities for larger employer interest</p>	<p>Needed road improvement funding will not be available; Protect connection with outdoors & unique character; Draw of West Valley venues siphons off residents; attractions in other areas;</p>	<p>Transportation and Utility Improvements a top priority</p>
Labor Force and Education	<p>Young, well-educated workforce; Top-notch K-12 system; ASU Poly; CGCC;</p>	<p>Work at Home & telecommuting environment; grow higher education</p>	<p>Education stats out-of-date and don't reflect actual WF education level; Dominance of construction jobs & vulnerability if downturn; Mobile population makes WF somewhat volatile; Need to understand the data ex) QC graduation rates</p>	<p>Increasing K-12 population means Higher Ed has to keep-up; due to constant changes in technology today's treasure becomes tomorrow's trash - need for ongoing education.</p>	<p>Labor Force Study is needed to document labor force size, skills and other factors as well as further define training needs.</p>

QUEEN CREEK SWOT Analysis

<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Rush hour volume brings potential customers. Transportation routes create economic corridors and public "gathering places." Opp. to plan roads as part of overall transportation planning & connect Town services & other elements to roadway development. Can add surface streets where needed/beneficial. Meridian L-CAT. Potential Limited-Access Streets, Toll Roads. Annex to South side of W/GFreeway.</p> <p>WGA, Sky Harbor, UPRR, Wide ROW, Major Traffic Corridors established. Ellsworth Improvement District. Non-vehicle connectivity with parks, paths, trails system & access to schools.</p>	<p>No freeway access. No State Highway. Limited State/County assistance thru traffic impacts. RR cuts off north/south access. No available Rail Siding space. Limited mass-transit ridership. Need more Bus/Rail/Etc Transit options to move people; including potential Hub/Spoke concept.</p>	<p>Lack of funding. Pass through traffic. No control over traffic origin. Rush hour volume. Drainage & Flood Control issues. Regional Transportation issues affecting businesses wanting to locate in the community.</p>	
<p>Business Climate</p>	<p>Telecom; WGA & FTZ proximity; City Processes; Chamber has good Sm. Biz interaction; GPEC, NEPEP, WJB support; Potential advantage in development timing by acting before GM property develops.</p>	<p>Telecom; Support for Start-up businesses; strong base of HBB; City Biz ombudsman; Growing residential markets north & south; New commercial developments with available space. T-Gen. Potential FTZ - sub-zone.</p>	<p>State legislation on incentives; State legislation reducing local control; Risk of thinking too small and not preparing for expected area population growth;</p>	
<p>Real Estate Resources (sites&bldgs)</p>	<p>GPEC Certified Program, Shovel Ready Initiative. Outskirts of Greater Phx. GM & WGA area development grows market. Potential to create high-quality destination for WGA visitors and area residents. Potential high-density housing close to work, retail. Dev. on East-South side of W/GFreeway. Can grow Retail & Emp Base job cntrs. Define desired development, key locations and attract strong developers.</p> <p>Large tracts of available land. Infrastructure nearby. Many amenities. Elevation of the Santan Mountains. Potential for Resort Development.</p>	<p>No speculative buildings for employment uses, few fully improved land sites. No rail siding space.</p>	<p>Amount of Land available in Mesa (along Pecos Rd). Distance from urban-core. re:</p>	<p>Lack data on retail demand needed to understand how much of what type of retail is supported. Need to identify unique parcels in north section of Town for potential large industrial users or Business Parks. Need to understand and plan for role of frontage vs. interior parcels re:</p>

QUEEN CREEK SWOT Analysis

<p>Utilities and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Town Govt. is proactive on this issue - commitment to extend sewer. QC Irrigation District. Ground-water recharge district. Effluent from WWTP. Have 2 MGD capacity in Mesa/Gilbert/QC WWTP.</p>	<p>Proactively push infrastructure into employment core; acquisition of water company will put control of domestic water in the Town's hands. Effluent water re-use. Purchase more capacity at wastewater treatment plant. (how much capacity does Town want or afford?) Potential for Town role as ISP or Muni-WIFI</p>	<p>Need to plan for needed water resources, lack surface water rights. Ability of Utilities to keep-up w/development. Lack of nearby County/State Government services such as emission testing, etc. Need Post Offices. Impact of landfill closing?</p>	<p>Existing Mesa infrastructure to the north could put Town at a competitive disadvantage.</p>	
<p>Financial Resources</p>	<p>Improvement District shows Town's support of private/public partnerships.</p>	<p>Increase bonding capacity. Can use Special Districts to fund Land improvement. Acceptance by Town voters of property tax for public safety means commercial property will contribute to Town budget thru this channel.</p>	<p>No utility revenues. Property Tax has not been available to fund needed improvements to land.</p>	<p>Dependence on Impact Fees, construction/sales tax. Inflation increases construction costs. Limits on bonding capacity could be constraint.</p>	<p>How do we fund needed infrastructure?</p>
<p>Educational Resources</p>	<p>Great P-20 school capacity! ASU-Polytechnic, CGCC-Williams Campus, CAC resources. CGCC develop programs to support industry, ASU Poly will work with Town to grow economy. Different educational options in QC - public, charter, private schools. QCUSD and ASU Poly Partnership.</p>	<p>Gain reputation for top-notch K-12; higher education satellite facility. Hybrid campuses (online/campus). Growing enrollment can boost economy. WF Training partnerships. SBDC opportunities.</p>	<p>5 different school districts within QC with differing quality. Need to continue to strengthen schools for WF, QOL, and to be attractive as high-end, family oriented community. Low bachelors/masters degree rates in AZ.</p>	<p>Infrastructure of schools - not keeping pace with strong residential growth.</p>	

QUEEN CREEK SWOT Analysis

<p>Community Vision/Identity</p>	<p>Proactive vision; Record of implementing plans. Quality planning has produced desirable "product." Links to community Ag. heritage. Now updating General Plan with Economic Element to connect with Land Use planning.</p>	<p>Take destiny into own hands with strong, achievable vision. Keep small town feel, boutique niche. Continually improve K-12 (use top notch school district as a QOL asset to attract high end residential/employment). "Brand" as high-quality Town, name has value.</p>	<p>Long term political commitment (mayor/council terms)</p>	<p>Pass-thru, Rush Hour Traffic. Competition from other areas. Retain Quality Image with growth - Pinal County residential areas within 85242 zip code are in fact QC. Retain special touches that define Quality & sense of community. Resist pressure to "cheaper."</p>	<p>What Towns have stayed the course to achieve their vision? Lessons Learned by other places?</p>
<p>Incentives</p>	<p>Town has made significant investment in the community which has encouraged private investment.</p>	<p>Create an innovative incentives program, targeted by type and benefit.</p>	<p>Lack of State incentives</p>	<p>State Legislation on this issue.</p>	
<p>Potential for Office (advanced business services, back-office, data-center, design-center, software, educational services, etc) employment base</p>	<p>QC offers a reverse commute for some.(increase in gas prices) Region has strong demand for back office/data centers. Back Office "flex hours" can recruit from nearby student pop. Fiber.</p>	<p>Investor to build "spec" space. Market idea to developer. Establish I.D.A. - partnership with community and developer. Back office operation for outdoor retailer.</p>	<p>Companies want existing facilities.</p>	<p>Competition from other cities for "quality" employees.</p>	<p>Look at changing town regulations for HBB. Incentives support for knowledge based HBB. Define need for space.</p>
<p>Potential for Arts, Culture and "Experience" related employment base including Visitor and Entertainment</p>	<p>QCPAC. Agricultural heritage - Schnepf Farms. Horseshoe Park draw visitors from SE Valley. The Olive Mill is a unique facility.</p>	<p>Partnership with Gila River Indian Community for a Resort/Event Center, Casino? Nurseries. Farmer's Market. Upscale Dude Ranch.</p>			
<p>Potential for Manufacturing & Assembly (electronics, aerospace, furniture, etc) employment base</p>	<p>Northern Tier of employment no residential uses b/c of noise contours.</p>	<p>High tech mfg. Companies can own land in QC not lease (WGA) Phasing of employment as community matures and land values increase. Tie workforce training into strategy. New access into airport west of Hawes.</p>			<p>Work with GPEC on the Emerging Technologies initiative - bio tech, aerospace, energy. Identify assets and where facilities should be?</p>
<p>Potential for Warehousing & Distribution employment base</p>	<p>Lg. tracts of available land.</p>	<p>FTZ at WGA - sub-zone for QC.</p>	<p>UPRR - no large tracts of land available for rail spur.</p>		
<p>Retail</p>	<p>Community image "draw" - Scottsdale of SE Valley. Town has high dev. \$tds.</p>	<p>Main Street program in Redevelopment Area. Encourage specialty retail.</p>	<p>No available wedding reception, banquet facilities.</p>		